

The President's Daily Brief

22 August 1969

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VIETNAM

Huong resigned this morning, according to the press.
We have no details yet.

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There is fresh evidence that Hanoi has spent a good deal of its time this year putting its own house in order.

--A series of agricultural reforms has been put into effect. Aimed at getting farmers back on the socialist track, these measures among other things attempt to restore the prewar authority of the collective and to crack down on individual profiteering.

--The screws are being tightened on local officials to improve military recruiting and the quality of local forces. This summer, General Giap has spoken out twice on this problem, which almost certainly results from the extremely heavy troop infiltration between late 1967 and early this year. (The need to allow local authorities to rebuild their military units may help to explain the drastic cutback in infiltration this spring.)

These are the kinds of things which both Giap and fellow-politburo member Truong Chinh have been advocating for some time. In essence, both argue that the war in the South could be pursued more effectively through greater reliance on long-term guerrilla warfare (as opposed, for instance, to the all-out attack at Tet, 1968). They also think the party must pay more attention to preserving and strengthening

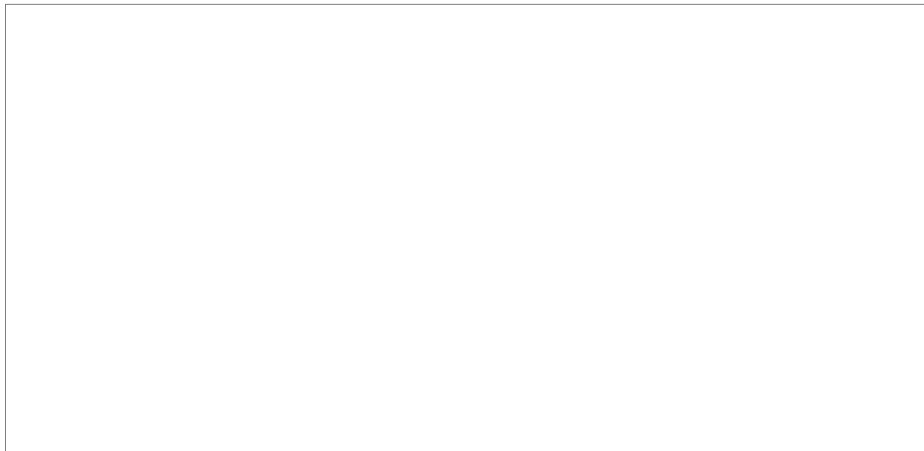
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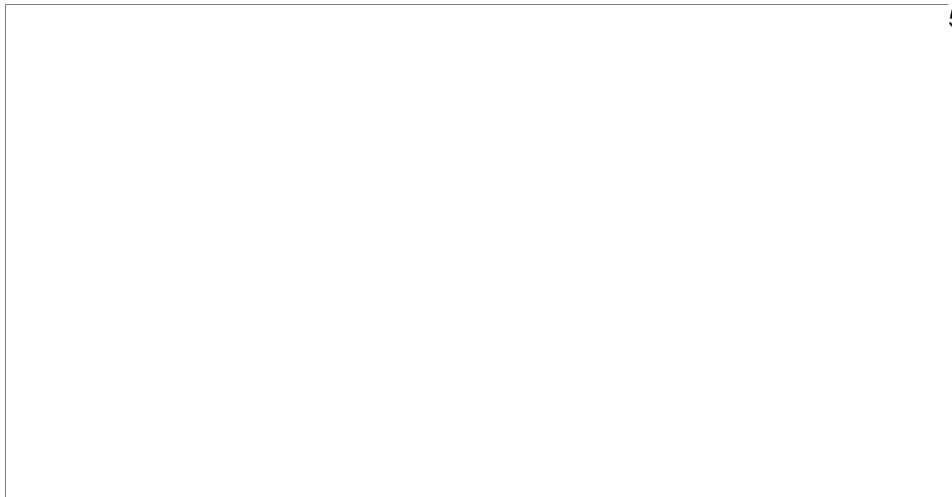
its position in North Vietnam. It is beginning to look as if they have carried the day, although presumably not without considerable debate in the party councils.

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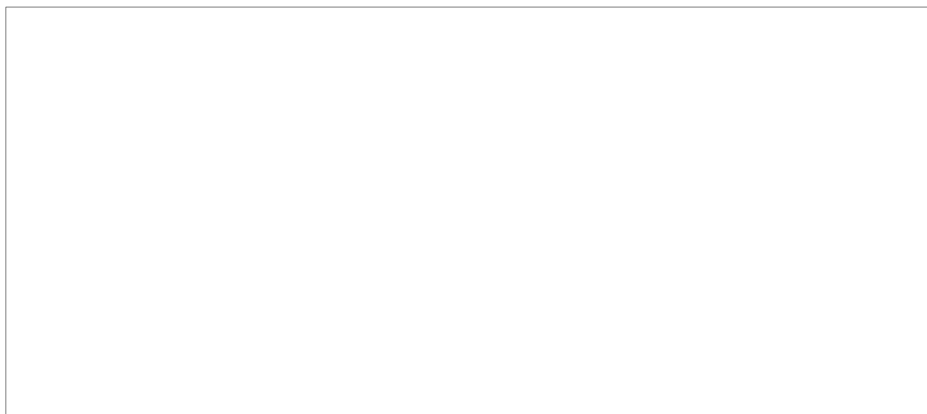
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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The demonstrations in Prague were large yesterday, but the security forces had no trouble handling them. Other forms of protest were more successful; the US Embassy reports that a boycott of transport services was 90 percent effective and that shopping was sharply curtailed.

The situation is quiet now. Some civil unrest could develop in the next few days, but the threat of a national crisis should ease now that the anniversary of the invasion has passed.



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MIDDLE EAST

We have nothing to indicate that yesterday's fire in the al-Aqsa Muslim shrine in Jerusalem was anything but accidental, caused perhaps by faulty wiring. Arab radio commentators, however, are predictably holding the Israelis responsible. There have already been some anti-Israeli demonstrations in East Jerusalem, and others can be expected. There may also be an Arab attempt to destroy a comparable synagogue.

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Some demonstrations may have anti-US overtones; the Voice of the Arabs in Cairo has accused the US of complicity because Washington condones Israeli moves to "Judaize" Jerusalem.

PAKISTAN

S. M. Ahsan, East Pakistan's governor-designate, has told US Embassy officers that Yahya wants to accelerate the return to civilian rule. He says Yahya has told him to begin negotiating a constitution acceptable to East and West Pakistan and to the martial law regime.

The regime believes East Pakistan's most popular leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, holds the key to the success of these efforts. To win his support it is willing to guarantee him the prime ministership--but only if he will forgo East Pakistan's traditional demands for broad regional autonomy and agree to a strong central government.

Sheikh Mujib obviously will have to do a good deal of soul searching. Ahsan gave no indication what the regime will do if Mujib turns down the offer.

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